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THE CIVIL WAR IN CHOWAN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

By

Richard Dillard

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North Carolina

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RICHARD DILLARD, A. M., M. D.

Formerly a Member of the North Carolina Historical Commission

O war, thou art the son of hell!

—*Shakespere*

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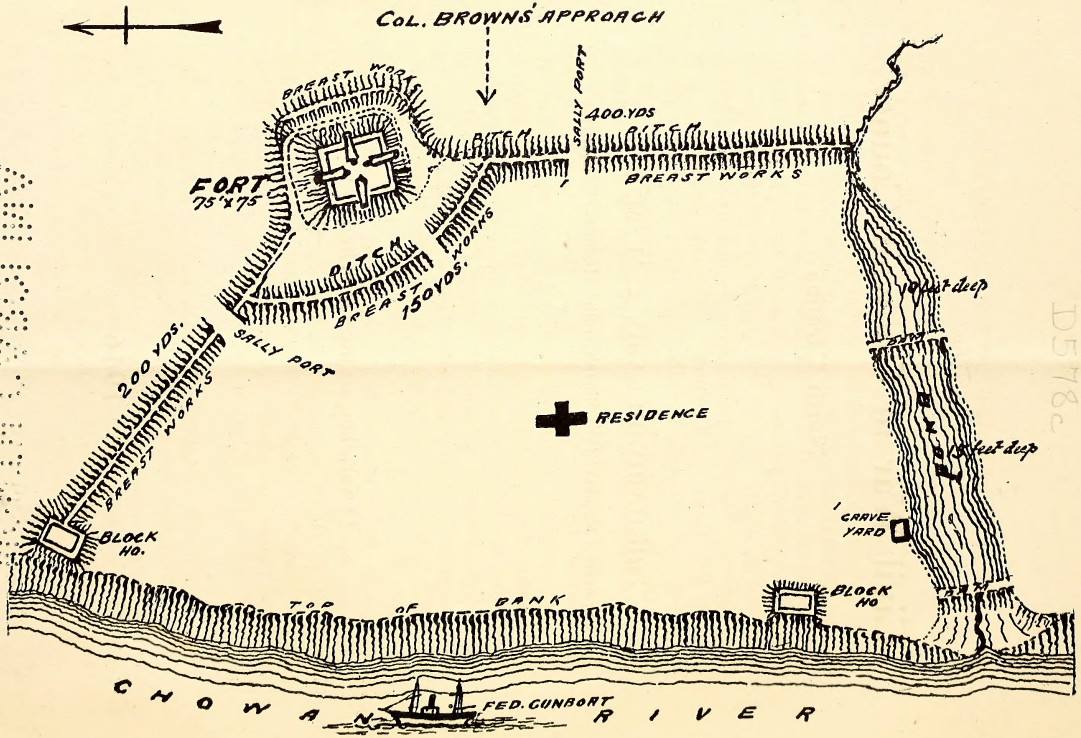

"FORT WINGFIELD" at the farm of Dr. Dillard on Chowan River.

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THE EARLY SECESSION MOVEMENT.

On February 21st, 1861, a mass meeting was held at the Court-House in Edenton to consider the interest of North Carolina, and her relation to the National Government. John H. Leary was elected chairman, and T. J. Bland Secretary. A committee was at once appointed consisting of John C. Badham, John A Benbury, Riddick Mansfield, John Thompson, and John H. Garrett to draft resolutions expressive of the sentiment of the people of the county. Three reports were submitted, a majority report by John A. Benbury, advising prudence, and caution, and discretion, believing that the Peace Congress then in session would find a solution of the trouble between the states; then a minority report was submitted by John C. Badham urging an immediate separation from the Union, and the necessity of adopting means of defense: A third report was offered by John H. Garrett counselling a strict adherence for the time to the Union, until the incoming administration should commit some overt act sufficient to cause a rupture with the National Government. The majority report was, however, adopted, the minority withdrew at once from the Convention, and nominated John C. Badham as the secession candidate to represent the County in the State Convention, which had been called to convene in Raleigh. William E. Bond was nominated as the Union candidate. At the election held on February 22nd the result was as follows, Bond, four hundred and twenty-seven; Badham, seventy-nine; Bond's majority, three hundred and forty-eight.

On the 4th of March Lincoln was inaugurated, but those who loved the Union, and hoped for so much perceived in his inaugural address not a straw to cling to, and he soon afterwards issued his celebrated proclamation calling upon North Carolina to furnish troops to invade her sister states, and to force them again into the

Union; so on the 1st day of May a second convention was held in Edenton, and nominated Dr. Richard Dillard, senior, who was elected without opposition to the State Convention called by Gov. Ellis, which met in Raleigh on May 20th, the anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, and severed our connection with the Union. This convention is considered the ablest body of men that ever assembled for any purpose within the borders of the State.

Warlike preparations at once began, the "Dixie Rebels," a six-months' volunteer company, was at once organized by Capt. James K. Marshall, he was afterwards promoted to the rank of Colonel. John C. Badham, a Lieutenant in this company, afterwards became Major in the 5th N. C., and gave his life for his country at Williamsburg, Va., May 5th, 1862, at which time he held a commission of Lieut.-Colonel. Capt. T. L. Skinner also organized a company; he fell at Mechanicsville, and was succeeded by John A. Benbury, who soon shared the same fate.

In November, 1861, the entire militia of Chowan County was ordered to Roanoke Island for its defense. It consisted of four companies, commanded by Captains Jno. C. Pearce, Thos. Wilson, Isaac Byrum, and J. C. Johnston. These companies constituted the 5th Regiment of N. C. militia. The regimental officers were W. A. Moore, Col., R. G. Mitchell, Lt.-Col., Wm. H. Bonner, Major, Wm. Badham, Quarter Master, Jos. G. Godfrey, Commissary, Dr. R. H. Winborne, Surgeon and Dr. L. P. Warren, Assistant Surgeon. After this a draft of militia was again made, and a company formed with John C. Pearce as Captain. They encamped for some time at Center Hill.

The Edenton Bell Battery was recruited by Capt. Wm. Badham in the winter '61-'62, and left Edenton soon after the fall of Roanoke Island, they went to Weldon, and on to Raleigh with sixty men, there they were joined by Lieut. Nelson McCleese of Tyrrell County, with twenty-two men, and by Lieut. Gaskins with about twenty men.

It was understood that Mr. McCleese in attaching himself to this battery would receive a commission as Lieut. Lieut. McCleese was to command one section and two guns, and Lieut. John M. Jones another section and two guns also. After drilling in Raleigh about two months, they were ordered to Camp Lee near Richmond for instruction. As gun metal was scarce, Capt. Badham sent Lieut. Jones to Edenton to secure the church bells, and any others that he might obtain, to be cast into cannon, in response to General Beauregard's famous call. He readily secured all the bells except the Baptist (several members objecting), including the town and court-house bells, the Academy bell, and the shipyard bells; these were conveyed to Suffolk across the country in a wagon, and shipped to the Tredegar Iron Works at Richmond, where they were cast into four cannon, and named respectively, the "St. Paul," the "Fannie Roulhac," for a devout and patriotic lady, a staunch member of the Methodist Church, the "Columbia," and the "Edenton." As the complement of the artillery corps of General Lee's army was then complete, an order was issued that all other artillery in camps should be transferred, for the time, to the infantry service; this produced great mortification, and disappointment in the company, and Capt. Badham at once dispatched Lieut. Jones to President Jefferson Davis with the following note: "Sir: The guns of my company were made of the bells of my town, and have tolled to their last resting place a great many of the parents and relatives of my command, and sooner than part with these guns, they had rather be taken out and shot. But, if allowed to keep these guns they will stand by them till they die."

This spirited, and patriotic letter was handed to Colonel Dorcas then chief of ordinance, who conveyed it at once to President Davis. Lieut. Jones had not long to wait, the reply came at once that the company would be furnished as soon as possible with both artillery-horses, and harness. The Battery was then assigned to Moore's Third North Carolina Battalion. Horses were difficult to procure, in the meantime McClellan had

assumed the offensive around Richmond, and the battery was ordered to Redoubt No. 7, until the horses arrived, when they were sent to Winchester to report to General Pendleton, after being there three months the battery was ordered to report for duty to General McLaws, but the order was soon rescinded. Then came a call from North Carolina ordering the battery to Wilmington, the guns were immediately shipped by rail to Wilmington, and Lieut. Jones with a special detachment carried the horses, and accoutrements through the country. When he arrived at Goldsboro, Gov. Vance, finding that the enemy were threatening, and near, ordered him to halt there, and the guns which had already arrived in Wilmington were immediately ordered by telegram back to Goldsboro. From Goldsboro they marched to Kinston, and reported to Gen. R. F. Hoke. Capt. Badham, upon receipt of news that an engagement was in progress, sent Lieut. McCleese with section No. 2 to Whitehall bridge, Lieut. Jones was ordered down ten hours later, when he found that McCleese had lost two of his men. Jones was then sent six miles up the river, but as no demonstration was made there, he was ordered on to Goldsboro to protect that town. After about a week the battery was ordered to Wilmington, and guarded the railroad bridge at Northeast, from there they went to Bald Head Island, and did guard duty on the coast until the fall of Fort Fisher, when they fell back on Fort Anderson; after the flank movement of the enemy, and the evacuation of Fort Anderson, the battery was located at Town Creek, where they were attacked by the enemy with considerable force, Capt. Badham sent Sergeant B. F. Hunter with one gun, the "St. Paul," to prevent them from making a flank movement, while he was engaging them at Town Creek; Hunter was supported by a detachment of South Carolina infantry, who broke and ran, leaving him on the field with but a squad of men. Hunter stood his ground fearlessly, and when the enemy arrived at the very muzzle of his gun, a Federal officer shouted to him, "If you fire that gun I will kill you." The Confederate Sergeant, with that coolness, and intrepidity which always charac-

terized him, replied, "Kill, and go to hell," and then ordered his gunner, William Hassell, to fire immediately. He was captured, and would have been cut down at once, but the Federal officer ordered his men to spare his life, saying, "He's too brave a man to be killed." About fifteen men were captured along with Sergeant Hunter and sent to prison at Point Lookout, among them Mr. A. T. Bush of this town. The remainder of the battery fell back to Wilmington, and were subsequently engaged at Cox's Bridge, finally surrendering to General Sherman at Greensboro.

The names, dimensions, and officers in command of the Edenton Bell Battery taken from the note-book of the late Capt. Wm. Badham.

The "St. Paul"—made from St. Paul's church bell in charge of Sergeant B. F. Hunter. Horwitzer 1533, E. B. face 1862 left trunnion I. R. A. & Co., F. F. right trunnion 7760 breech.

The "Fannie Roulhac"—made from the Methodist Church bell, and in charge of Sergeant Harry Gregory. Howitzer—1532 face E. B. also 1862, left trunnion I. R. A. & Co., F. F. Right trunnion breech 770.

The "Columbia"—made from the bells of the two shipyards, owned by Col. T. L. Skinner and Col. R. T. Paine. Gun in charge of Sergeant Ed. Davenport, 1534 face E. B. also—1862 left trunnion I. R. A. & Co., F. F. right trunnion, breech 860.

The "Edenton"—made from the Academy, Court House, and Hotel bells, and other bells presented by private individuals. Gun in charge of Sergeant George Parish. No. 1531 face E. B. 1862—left trunnion I. R. A. & Co., F. F. right trunnion 860 pounds breech.

The "St. Paul," and the "Edenton" were commanded by Lieut. John M. Jones, the "Fannie Roulhac," and "Columbia" were commanded by Lieut. Nelson McCleese. The guns did service at the following places, Winchester, Culpeper Court House, the Seven days fight around Richmond in redoubt No. 7, Goldsboro, Kinston, Whitehall Bridge, Bald Head, Smithfield, (now called Southport), Fort Anderson, Town Creek, the

streets of Wilmington, Bentonville, Cox's Bridge, and surrendered to General Sherman at Greensboro.

At the first outbreak of war the feeling had not fully crystallized here, but afterwards the majority of the best sentiment of the County was strongly in favor of Secession, and the whole atmosphere became infused and steeped in enthusiasm: As an evidence of the unselfish patriotism and earnestness of our people, I append the following from the records of the County Court here, which are of great local interest: Special Session of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions held for the County of Chowan at the Court House in Edenton on the 27th day of April, A. D. 1861, the following Justices being present, to-wit:

James D. Wynn,
Leml. Sawyer,
James Norcum,
T. L. Skinner,
Will H. Standin,
Saml. T. Bond,
Richard Dillard,
Alex H. Bond,
Wm. E. Bond.

It is ordered by the Court that the sum of Four Thousand Dollars be appropriated by the County for the purpose of assisting the families of those who shall volunteer from the County of Chowan, and whose families would suffer their absence. It is ordered further that John H. Leary, Wm. R. Skinner and William H. Elliott and Dr. R. Dillard be and they are appointed a finance committee for the purpose of distributing said fund. It is ordered that the Finance Committee are at any time empowered to borrow from any bank in the State, or from private individuals any portion, or so much of the above amount as in their judgment may be necessary. And it is further ordered that the Finance Committee shall at any time be empowered, either singly or conjointly to issue County orders in part of this fund redeemable twelve months after date, or sooner if in their judgment proper. Said orders not to bear interest and

always to be preferred to raising money through the banks and not to exceed both in orders or money borrowed from bank, the above mentioned amount. We hereby pledge the faith and resources of Chowan County to such notes or orders as the Finance Committee may sign. And it is further ordered that such Finance Committee meet at least once in every month.

To avoid misconception we hereby pledge the County to those who may volunteer in the service of their Country to make from time to time such other and further appropriations as may be necessary to continue the assistance above provided for the support of their families during their absence.

Jas. D. Wynne, (J. P.)
W. E. Bond, (J. P.)
Saml. T. Bond, (J. P.)
Leml. Sawyer, (J. P.)
Will H. Standin, (J. P.)
Alex H. Bond, (J. P.)
Jas. Norcum, (J. P.)
Rich. Dillard, (J. P.)
T. L. Skinner. (J. P.)

MAY TERM, 1861.

Whereas the following gentlemen, towit: John H. Leary, did on the 3rd day of this month execute their bond payable to.....
for the sum of Two Thousand Dollars for the purpose of procuring funds to defray the expenses of the Volunteers from this County, it is ordered by the Court, that the said debt be assumed by the County, and that a committee of two be appointed and empowered to receive and disburse said amount, and that said committee be further empowered and authorized to borrow on the faith and credit of the County, any further sum, which in their judgment the necessities of the Volunteers may require.

Ordered that Thomas D. Warren and Thomas W. Hudgins be and they are appointed the committee for receiving and disbursing and carrying into effect the

above order and that they keep an account of their acts, and return an account of the same with vouchers to this Court.

Edenton, N. C.
April 27th, 1861.

Dr. Richard Dillard:

Dear Sir:

Your noble offer to the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of Chowan County has been laid before us, and had our consideration. The following action was taken on it with entire unanimity:

Resolved: That we have received with pleasure the generous and patriotic offer of the net produce and profits of your farm to the support of our volunteers and their families:—that we accept it with the intention of availing ourselves of it so far as may be necessary:—and that we spread upon the Records of the Court this act of whole-souled patriotism on the part of Dr. R. Dillard, that it may be held in perpetual remembrance.

We are, Dear Sir,
Yours very respectfully,

Jas. D. Wynn, J. P.
T. L. Skinner, J. P.
Jas. T. Norcom, J. P.
Saml. T. Bond, J. P.
Alex. H. Bond, J. P.
Will. H. Standing, J. P.
Leml. Sawyer, J. P.
W. E. Bond, J. P.

John A. Benbury at the same time pledged his estate for Five Thousand Dollars to the support of our volunteers and their families.

After the Buffaloes had become established at Wingfield, a Ranger Company was organized with Edmund Blount as Captain, but becoming frightened, Capt. Blount resigned, and sympathized with the Union cause: the other Captains were Peter M. Warren, Jesse Rogerson,

and Richard Keough an Irishman, who was in command at the close of the war: They numbered thirty five or forty men, and were encamped out in the deep woods on the "Thickneck Road." Sometimes squads of these Rangers would visit Edenton at night and leave their guns with Mr. E. W. Burton, who lived on East Church Street, near the old Methodist Church (some years ago destroyed by fire): Mr. Burton, who was then a boy, would crawl in one of the church windows and hide the guns under the pulpit, over Parson Holmes' grave, and deliver them to the Rangers when they left town just before daybreak.

WINGFIELD AND THE BUFFALOES.

While all these military activities were going on by our people to defend their country against the invasion of a common enemy, the disloyal element of this section were no less occupied: A number of lawless men, styled Buffaloes, banded themselves together to rob, pillage, and otherwise menace the public safety. These men were not the sole product of Chowan County, but gathered from the entire section of Eastern North Carolina, and from Virginia. They seized and established themselves at Wingfield, the beautiful home of Dr. Richard Dillard, Senior, and it soon became the rendezvous of fugitive negroes, lawless white men, traitors, and deserters from the Confederate army. This place was selected by them not only on account of its strategic situation upon an elevated table-land along the Chowan River, but in the neighborhood there were a number of people strongly in favor of the Union cause, giving them additional security and audacity: It was also done as an act of vengeance against Dr. Dillard who was an ardent Secessionist, and a member of the Convention that seceded the State from the Union. And more than that, a spirit of anarchy and destruction seemed to possess them all.

They were held in contempt alike by both Confederates and Federals as may be seen from Lieut. Comm. Flusser's report:

Report of Lieutenant-Commander Flusser, U. S. Navy, regarding expedition to Edenton, N. C.

U. S. S. Commodore Perry,
Plymouth, N. C., September 19, 1862.

My Dear Davenport:

I sent to Edenton yesterday to arrest some thirty men who had formed themselves into a company to attack *our home guard thieves at Wingfield,* and who were only prevented from executing their intentions by an accident to the man who was to furnish the ammunition for the party. Colhoun succeeded in capturing three. I send them to-day to Roanoke, with a request to Howard to hold them.

. . . . . .

With best wishes, yours sincerely,
C. W. Flusser.

Commander H. K. Davenport,
New Berne, N. C.

Wingfield was in Colonial days the home of the Brownriggs, who emigrated from the Vale of Avoca in Wicklow County, Ireland. The house was finished in 1762, and was built of brick. It was a large square central building with wings on either side, and fronted directly on the river: The bank, which is quite bold at this point, was terraced down to the river shore: Long rows of Catalpa trees, planted with reference to use in shipbuilding, stretched from the house to the main road, three quarters of a mile. Few gates were used about the premises, old fashioned English stiles, with broad platforms, took their places.

This house was destroyed by a fire which originated in the laundry wing in 1772, and was not rebuilt until 1790, the new building, though a wooden structure,

preserving the beauty and form of the old one: Formerly an old wind mill stood sentinel upon the river bank, and away to the south, at the mouth of Indian Creek, which bounds the estate, nestled the fishery, with its long low shelters, the first one ever established in this section. It was an idylic spot; the sunshine spilled in diapered patterns of light and shadow upon the lawn through the rifts in the foilage of the stately ancestral trees, and the ancient river lapped the shore at the back of the beautiful old garden. Such was Wingfield at the time of its occupation by the Buffaloes. Wheeler, our historian, says: "This section of the state suffered sadly from the ravages of warfare, for after the fall of Roanoke Island the sounds and navigable rivers were open to the enemy's gunboats. These coasted up and down, and bore off the means and necessaries of life, living freights of fugitive negroes, and the low and skulking Buffaloes. These were shameless and mean whites, who turned traitors to their friends, and betrayed them to their unrelenting foes: They were held in abhorrence and contempt. They established a stronghold at Wingfield, the lovely homestead of the Brownrigg family, afterwards occupied by Dr. Dillard, but the Buffaloes took possession, and the spacious halls, once the scene of elegance and beauty, were occupied by a foul and cowardly crew, who became such an intolerable nuisance that the building was fired. These miscreants plundered alike the plate and pianos of the rich, as also the poultry and breadstuffs of the poor." The family were away in Virginia, and the late Mr. Wm. P. Jones was in charge at Wingfield when the Buffaloes arrived, but he stubbornly refused to leave his post. In August, 1862, a detachment of N. Y. Mounted Rifles from Suffolk under Capt. Terwilliger, seventy-five in all, came to the place, and ordered him to furnish his men with the necessary supplies, he remained two weeks, and was succeeded by Captain Walter S. Poor, and he in turn by Capt. A. J. McLane: After that another Company of cavalry came and took complete possession of everything, and demanded the keys, which Mr. Jones peremptorily refused to surrender; he was then placed under

arrest in the carriage house, the buildings were broken open and looted, and he was ordered to either leave, or take the oath of allegiance and remain with them, this he contemptuously declined to do, and left the place: The Buffaloes were now in complete possession, and constituted Company E of the North Carolina United States Infantry, commanded by the notorious Jack Fairless; Fairless was subsequently killed at Wardville by one of his own men, a deserter from the Confederate army, named Wallace. Fairless was very abusive and overbearing, and Wallace drew his revolver and shot him dead, making good his escape, after that Joseph W. Etheridge, 1st Lieut. was in command.

Report of Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Woodard, U. S. Navy, regarding conduct of a company of home guards stationed at Wingfield, N. C.

U. S. S. Shawsheen,
Off Plymouth, N. C., September 28, 1862.

Sir:

In obedience to your order, I submit to you the following report in regard to proceedings of a company of home guards stationed at Wingfield, Chowan County, N. C. On my arrival there on the 18th of September I found out of sixty-three recruits only twenty present; the others had gone to their homes or elsewhere, as they chose. The captain was in a state of intoxication, threatening to shoot some of the remaining men, and conducting himself in a most disgraceful manner by taking one man's horse and making other people pay him the money to pay for them, and this, too, from people who were well disposed toward our Government. He had some eight or ten horses when I went there, gotten in this way. He has no contral over his men and (by) the manner in which he conducts himself he is doing much injury to the cause of the U. S. Government. Some of the men that have gone have taken their arms or guns with them; the ammunition has all been smuggled out and

sold to citizens for liquor; what remaining arms there were I took on board for safe-keeping. On the 21st, Captain Fairless went off and left his men, as he said, to go to New Berne by way of Suffolk. His men say they will serve under him no longer. They are now left in charge of a man they call lieutenant, with no clothing, no rations; are dependent on the county for subsistence.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Thos. J. Woodward,

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Lieutenant-Commander Chas. W. Flusser,

Senior Naval Officer Present.

Wingfield was occupied by them nearly two years, and most of the time a United States gunboat was stationed in the river back of the house. On Nov. 17th, 1862, Capt. Ned Small of Edenton with a company of 20 picked men, among whom was Mr. W. D. Rea, crossed the Chowan at Harrellsville with the intention of capturing the Buffalo camp at Wingfield, but too much publicity had been given his plans, the pickets were informed and on the alert, and having ample warning the Buffaloes took refuge on the gunboat back of the garden.* The neighborhood was then shelled and Small was obliged to withdraw without having accomplished his purpose.

The following is the report of the Federal Commander concerning this expedition.

U. S. S. Shawsheen,

Off Wingfield, N. C., November 19, 1862.

Sir:

I have the honor to submit to you the following report of preceedings about here day before yesterday, the 17th instant. A body of rebel troops crossed the river

*The following boats were on duty at Wingfield during the Buffalo occupation: The Hunchback, E. R. Calhoun, Comm., The Shawsheen, Thos. J. Woodward, Comm., Whitehead, Chas. A. French, Comm., and the Lockwood, G. W. Graves, Comm.

at night—near as can be ascertained, two companies, Small's and Hill's. They have pressed horses and mounted part of their number. Last night they drove in all the pickets. At 10 P. M. I drove them back by shelling them, when the pickets were put out and at 3 A. M., 18th instant, they were driven in again by cavalry and infantry, when I again shelled them out. No more was seen of them, as the pickets were not put out until daylight. Expended forty rounds of ammunition during the night. The U. S. S. Lockwood arrived up here at 8 o'clock to-night. At 11:30 P. M. the pickets were all driven in. At about the same time the troops all fell back to the river, when both steamers shelled the grounds in the vicinity of the camp and picket station, as many troops were seen. I took all our troops and all the contrabands on board, there being about 200 contrabands now here, then threw a few rounds of grape and canister all about the camp ground. Everything remains quiet at present since shelling them. We destroyed the boats they came across in. They crossed about 2 miles above here at Cannon's Ferry, (Chowan River). Two men left here this morning with a dispatch for Suffolk, (Va.), to acquaint the general commanding there of their being on this side of the river.

As they have not effected their object in capturing the home guard or destroying the headquarters, I think they will not stay on this side long. As there is no provision made here for contrabands, I will send part of what are here to Plymouth by the Lockwood for your disposal. She will leave at daylight.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Thos. J. Woodward,

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Lieutenant-Commander Chas. W. Flusser,

Senior Officer, Albemarle Sound.

Wingfield was unfortified at that time, and the Buffaloes had no protection save from the gunboats lying out in the river, but it was accomplished with the

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greatest military skill and alacrity; a Federal officer was detailed to devise the plans, and have them executed, and the large number of negroes, who had fled thither from the masters, were compelled to do this work. A line of breastworks were constructed commencing at the river bank some distance above the house, running a southeasterly direction 200 yards, they then turned south 400 yards across the field to a ravine, which carried a small stream, fed by springs: Across this was thrown a dam to hold water 10 ft. deep, and, at a point where it emptied into the river, was another dam holding water 15 feet deep; making approach from the south almost impossible; on the river bank were erected two blockhouses, and at the northeast angle of the fortifications, which was their weakest point, a fort was constructed, the earth was thrown up in a mound 75 feet square and 15 feet high, and this was surmounted by a house built of heavy hewn logs covered with a flat roof. Embrasures were made for rifles, and four port holes looking North, South, East and West; here they planted a cannon, which had been secured at Edenton. The fortifications in all comprised an area of 50 acres, with the residence in the middle, and two sally-ports. A smaller line of inside breastworks 150 yards long encircled the fort, to prevent enfilading. For their further security, and to prevent surprises, they cut down all the trees in the lawn and along the river bank, and burned all the buildings lying outside the fortifications, reserving the residence for general headquarters. During the winter of 1863 the 42nd N. C. Regiment was quartered at Garysburg, Col. Jno. E. Brown of Charlotte in comand. Col. Brown was ordered by Gen. D. H. Hill to attack the fort at Wingfield and drive the Buffaloes from the section. So taking with him Company B, W. H. Crawford, Captain, Co. E, T. J. Brown, Capt. and Co. F, Wiley F. Clement, Captain, making a complement of 150 men, he established headquarters at Merry Hill, placing a line of pickets to protect his movements.

Early in March, 1863, as soon as he had completed his arrangements, he crossed the Chowan in small boats,

and landed at Chamber's Ferry after dark, intending to suprise the enemy the next morning at daybreak, but finding the distance greater than expected, he decided to march his men to a woods surrounding Wingfield, in an easy striking distance, bivouac for the night, and watch the enemy's movements: The next day was Sunday, which the Buffaloes spent in target shooting and general carousing. That evening he captured several of the Buffaloes on the road going to the camp, but one of the enemy's pickets accidentally saw some of his men, and running to the block houses, sounded the long roll: Almost immediately the Federal gunboat, lying back of the house, shelled Col. Brown's position so vigorously that he was forced to retire and his plans were for the time frustrated. Col. Brown then resolved to recross the River, being in the enemy's country with but one day's rations. At the mouth of Rockyhock Creek he was attacked by 200 Federal Cavalry from Gatesville, and a body of marines, which had been landed from a gunboat in the river: A fierce engagement followed, but the Federals, terror-stricken by the "Rebel yell," which was here used for the first time, fell back into the adjacent swamps. A relief expedition was hastily formed by the Confederates on the other side of the river, and Col. Brown and his men were taken across the Chowan at midnight in safety.

But Col. Brown was not to be foiled and discouraged by this failure, for in about three weeks he again crossed the river and attacked the Buffaloes at Wingfield at daybreak, approaching the place by what is known as the "Yellow Hammer Road." It was a thick foggy morning, not a gunboat was in the river, and he charged the enemy's camp, crossing the open field with a rush, en masse, and captured it: A number of buffaloes and negroes fled to the swamp, while others escaped in small boats to Plymouth, then in the hands of the Federals. Twenty-two of the buffaloes, finding their escape cut off, took refuge in the large blockhouse, their cannon was fired twice by a man named Byrum, but the aim was poor and no casualties resulted. One Federal soldier was

killed, and buried in the family graveyard. Col. Brown, having no artillery, did not attempt to capture the blockhouse. General Foster, in the meantime, learning of the engagement, came up with three gunboats, and under their protection the twenty-two remaining buffaloes were taken on board, and he steamed away: Col. Brown burned the residence, and destroyed the forts to prevent their return, and then withdrew his troops. He thus delivered the country from the depredation of the Buffaloes. This happened about the First of April, 1863. The outline of these fortifications are as distinct today as when they were first erected. I appead the following from the Naval War Records, Vol. VIII:

Report of Acting Master French, U. S. Navy, commanding U. S. S. Whitehead, regarding the duties performed by that vessel from October 1st to 15th, 1862.

U. S. S. Whitehead,
Off Plymouth, October 22, 1862.

Sir:

In obedience to your order relative to the employ of this steamer under my command from the 1st to the 15th instant, I respectfully submit the following report in detail:

On the 1st, left my anchorage off Wingfield (Chowan River) and proceeded down in search of boats, stopping at intervals and sending an armed crew on shore, where I found and destroyed several; returned to my anchorage at 10 A. M. At 1 P. M. I took one officer and armed crew and proceeded up the river to a creek some 6 miles above in search of a noted rebel, but did not succeed in finding him at home. I captured and destroyed four boats. At 4:30 I returned on board.

On 2d and 3d, took part in expedition up river under your command, a report of which has already been given you.

On 4th, left my anchorage off Wingfield and proceeded down river; fired two shots at a boat, which

brought her alongside, containing three fishermen; paroled the men, destroying their boat. Chased another boat on shore; sent on shore and destroyed her, together with an army wagon; returned to anchorage at 5:30 received two deserters from the rebel Army on board; administered to them the oath of allegiance, and enlisted them in the home guard stationed here.

On 6th, cruised up and down river and returned to anchorage. At 8 P. M. got underway and proceeded down; anchored; at 9:30 took armed crew on shore and proceeded to the house of a rebel about 3 miles inland; surrounded it, capturing him and a rebel soldier; also a small quantity of goods destined for Colerain; sent a detachment to the house of Mr. Felton; captured him, but found no goods. I subsequently paroled him.

On the 7th, learning that a quantity of goods, horses, contrabands, etc., were being sent to Empire (Emperor) Landing for the purpose of crossing, I got underway at 6 P. M. and went down; arrived there at 9 and went on shore with armed crew; proceeded inland about 2 miles to the house of Smith, a notorious smuggler, where I met a detachment of the company stationed at Wingfield, by this hoping to cut off their retreat, but regret that the information came too late, they all having got over the river with the exception of two mules and cart; these I captured and sent to camp. Smith was not to be found.

On the 9th I proceeded up river near to the mouth of the Blackwater, destroyed several boats, and returned to anchorage at 8:30 P. M. From this date to 15th nothing occurred worthy of note. Total number of boats captured and destroyed, 16.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Charles A. French,
Acting Master, Commanding Steamer Whitehead.

Lieutenant Commander, Charles W. Flusser,
Commanding Naval Forces in Albemarle Sound.

THE CAVALRY RAIDS.

After the Rangers had been organized, a squad of Federal cavalry belonging to a New York Regiment, and piloted by a negro boy were fired upon from ambush out near "Lone Pine;" a soldier named Churchill was wounded, and one named Fulliger was killed, having been shot through the heart, he rode two hundred yards before falling: He was brought in town, and carried to Mr. Thomas Hankins' undertaker shop on Main street, the same house now occupied by the Chinese Laundry, his body was subsequently removed by the Federals.

The other soldier, named Churchill from New York, was very painfully wounded in the head, and was cared for in a room above Mr. Geo. W. Smith's store, now occupied by Mr. E. W. Burton: he was nursed by the very best ladies of the town, and received every kindness and attention from the people. Eventually convalescing, he went away on a gunboat, after thanking the people of the town for treating him so nobly and so generously.

Some time after this incident a punitive expedition came here from Suffolk, Va., consisting of two Regiments of Cavalry, the Pennsylvania Bucktails, under Col. Saml. P. Spear, and the First New York Mounted Rifles, commanded by Col. Underdonk. Two thousand men and horses arrived at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, and were all over town before their presence was even suspected. After they had been here about an hour, a picket came running in and stated that one of their men had been shot near the branch on the "Paxton Lane:" Major Terwilliger, who was with Col. Underdonk, angrily exclaimed," Damn them, we will burn this town!" Col. Thomas W. Hudgins, then Mayor, hastily called a meeting of the town officers, and after a heated argument with the Federal officers, prevailed upon them to abandon their horrible intention, saying that "the people of the town should not be held responsible for a shooting done in the country."

As a matter of protection, and under special invitation, Major Terwilliger took up his headquarters at the

old Edenton Bank building, then a private residence, and now called "Beverly Hall:" It was summer, and his soldiers slept upon the porches, and tied their horses to the fences in front of the building, and Dr. T. D. Warren's next door, and demolished them: Some of the other officers were quartered in the Paxton house, just across the street; Col. Underdonk had his headquarters at the residence of Mr. S. T. Bond on Main Street. When the shooting of the soldier was first announced, nearly every citizen caught on the streets was arrested, including the boys, these were packed in the guard-house, the little store next to Mr. Brothers', it was then the tailor shop of a free mulatto man, named Mack Manning, this place was dubbed by the prisoners, "Fort Mack."

Their discomforts and sufferings were intense, crowded in the small building on a hot August day, with no ventilation, but a kind hearted soldier, passing by pittied them and said that if any one would write a note he would take it to the Provost Marshal." A piece of brown paper was at once produced, and the note written: Very soon they were all marched to a more comfortable place, the old Sawyer Store, where the Branning Store now stands. Here they were confined for two days and nights, without food or water, except what was sent from their several homes. Finally on Saturday afternoon they were marched in squads of four or five to the office of the Provost Marshal, in a building near the Woodard House, and discharged. The regiments marched away on Sunday morning.

A very amusing incident occurred just here. Before Col. Underdonk's raid, a squad of New York Cavalry from Suffolk desired to come to Edenton under a flag of truce, to take back into the Federal lines a lady, the widow of Jos. S. Jones, who wished to return to her people in Pennsylvania and of course desired to communicate with the Captain of the Rangers to get his protection, but no one could tell of his whereabouts. Mr. E. W. Burton, then a boy, informed the Mayor that he could find him, and sure enough in a short while returned

having made the necessary arrangements, and protection was assured. Sometime later Col. Underdonk came, and knowing about the incident, found Mr. Burton and demanded to know the location of the Rangers, this time to capture them, but Mr. Burton, loyal to his people, refused to give the desired information: He was then accused of being a spy for the Rangers, and was commanded to mount a caisson, filled with shells and other explosives attached to a gun commanded by Sergeant Eddy: While all this was going on the news came concerning the shooting of a soldier on the Paxton Lane, and the battery was rushed on a full run to the spot; Mr. Burton sweltering in the August heat and dust, held on to the ropes until his hands were blistered: It is needless to say that the Rangers were not found and the battery returned to Edenton, parading Mr. Burton through the streets. He was then taken before Col. Underdonk and released, but on his way home he passed a rifle some one had dropped in the street, and a Union soldier, coming up suddenly accused him of having had it; this came near being a serious matter for Mr. Burton, but some ladies interceded, and the affair was dropped. The Federals, however, were not entirely satisfied, and again attempted to arrest him, but this time his mother concealed him under the kitchen floor, taking up a plank in the floor, Mr. Burton crawled under the building, the plank was nailed down, and a piece of carpet put over it. A search of the premises was made, but with no success. Mr. Burton was fed secretly by his mother for two days, until the last Yankee had left Edenton.

Underdonk's Cavalry committed all sorts of depredations, during their stay, they stole horses, provisions, robbed private houses of everything they could carry off, and insulted the citizens in every way possible. After this only a few stragglers came to Edenton. Edenton was unfortified during the war, and became neutral ground for both Confederates and Federals.

I append the following interesting communication from Genl. Butler.

HDQRS. DEPT. OF VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA,

Fort Monroe, February 10th, 1864.

W. E. Bond, J. I. Cannon, Joseph Waff:

Gentlemen: In answer to the inquiry proposed by you, as a committee from the citizens of Chowan County, N. C., I respectfully answer to the first, viz:

First: What will be the policy pursued toward the citizens of Chowan if they continue peaceable and quiet, abstaining from all acts of hostility?

Answer: That if the inhabitants of that county remain peaceable and quiet, abstaining from all acts of hostility, aiding blockade-running, or concealing guerrillas, they will not be interfered with by the troops of the United States, as we have no occasion to go into any parts of the country where no acts of hostility are committed against the Government.

To the second question viz:

Second. Will expeditions be projected into our country, and if found necessary to make them, will peaceable citizens and private property be protected and respected?

Answer: That unless some portion of Chowan County is occupied by some forces or signal parties of the Confederacy, or some parties hostile to the United States take refuge in that county no expedition will be sent therein, and if it becomes necessary to send expeditions there the private persons, and property of peaceable citizens will be protected and the expeditions be conducted on the principles laid down in General Orders, No. 10, current series, a copy of which is hereby inclosed.

To the third question, viz:

Third. Was not the order requiring and enforcing the oath of allegiance designed to apply only to persons embraced within your picket-lines?

Answer. That as the Government of the United States cannot throw, in fact its protection around the citizens of Chowan, they are excused from the corresponding obligations of actively expressing their

allegiance to the Government, which might endanger their safety from the enemies of the United States, and therefore, the oath of allegiance will not be required of the citizens of Chowan County until they are brought within our lines.

To the fourth question, viz:

Fourth. Cannot trade with Norfolk be opened and allowed to the people of Chowan and on what terms and under what restrictions?

Answer. That trade may be carried on with Norfolk under the same provisions as those given to the citizens of Pasquotank County, as expressed in a letter given to them, a duplicate of which is addressed to this committee.

In answer to the fifth question, viz:

Fifth. Cannot servants who have left us be prevented from returning or at least be restained from unnecessary offensiveness and actual outrage to feelings or property of their former owners?

I have the honor to say:

Answer. That the negroes who have left the county will not be allowed to return unless by stealth, and if upon returning in such manner they outrage the property or persons of their former owners it is hoped that they will be arrested and held by the citizens of the county and information sent to these headquarters, in order that they may be sent for and punished.

The sixth question is a more difficult one, viz:

Sixth. Can our citizens be permitted to fish with seines and nets on Albemarle Sound and on the eastern side of Chowan River and on what terms and under what restrictions?

Answer. It is understood by the commanding general that fishing with seines and nets in the sounds and rivers affords a large quantity of provision for the inhabitants of that part of North Carolina. The difficulty is, therefore, that that provision thus obtained may be stored in large amounts and tempt raids there by the Confederates, to the destruction of the peace of the county, requiring an armed force to be sent there to meet those raids on our part, unless we quietly permit supplies for

the rebel army to be drawn from that source. Now this is entirely irrespective of the good faith of the inhabitants of that country for if they accumulate provisions with the intent to use them in their families they may be taken from them justifiably, under the laws of war, to support the rebel army. These circumstances surround the use of the waters adjoining Chowan County with difficulties, and by means of our gun-boats any use of the waters may be very easily prevented; but the commanding general desires as is the policy of his Government, to extend every facility to the peaceable and quiet citizen of every part of the country to support themselves, and these facilities so far as it can be done without injury to the success of his troops in the field, will permit fish to be taken by seines and nets in the waters adjoining the county of Chowan, on the east side of Chowan River and the Albemarle, so long as no Confederate or North Carolina State troops shall come into that county; and provided further that no one citizen shall salt or cure more than ten barrels of fish for his own use, and there shall be no greater accumulation at any point within 7 miles of each other than one hundred barrels of fish so cured, and at no point any such accumulation be made more than 1 mile from navigable water of at least 4 feet draught.

As this permission is given wholly in deference to the wishes of the citizens of Chowan County, and for their use and benefit, and without any possible good to the United States except in taking care of its citizens and with very possible harm if it be abused, the utmost good faith will be required of the citizens to carry out in the same spirit of fairness as it is permitted this business of fishing and any abuse of this privilege, or any infraction of its terms, will be most severely dealt with as a breach of trust or confidence.

The seventh and last question, viz:

Seventh. We would further represent to Major-General Butler, in behalf of our fellow-citizens that during the progress of this dreadful conflict we have been exempted to a great extent from the presence of

troops in our midst, and we conceive the locality to be devoid of military importance, we sincerly hope and trust that Major-General Butler may not order its occupation by any of the troops under his command.

Is answered in the answer to the first question, and in the general spirit of the answers in this note.

The commanding general desires to call the attention of the committee and others than the citizens of the country to the fact that if their action is characterized with good faith and true desire to preserve the peace of the county there will be no possible difficulty and trouble can only result from the acts of bad men, who, either from hostility to the United States or from love of gain, will hazard the interests of their fellow-citizens and such men must be watched and restrained by the organized action of the citizens of the country, who have their own peace and quiet in their own hands.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

BENJ. F. BUTLER,
Major-General Commanding.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE FEDERAL FLEET AT EDENTON.

The morning of Wednesday, February 12th, 1862, dawned calm and fair and beautiful at Edenton, the sunlight flashing upon its bay like summer sheet-lightning: Most of the inhabitants were at breakfast, busy clerks were sweeping off the sidewalk in front of their stores, two or three old covered carts, laden with country produce, were standing on Main Street just below the old town pump, juntas of excited men were at the corners, discussing the recent news of the fall of Roanoke Island, and the capture of Elizabeth City: Some one came running up from the wharf saying that the enemy's fleet were rounding Cherry's Point. No one could fore-tell the object of their visit, everyone feared the bombardment and destruction of the town.

"Then there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
Or whispering with white lips—The foe! They come!
They come!"

At first two men-of-war appeared around the Point, and retired, then three were observed. It was half past eight when they steamed slowly and cautiously in the bay: Two came to anchor, but the Lockwood, commanded by Captain G. W. Graves, landed at the foot of Main Street: The first thing Captain Graves did was to order his men to roll the cotton, some eight or ten bales belonging, I have heard to Dr. Geo. H. Cooke, aboard, and packed it around his boilers, saying it would make a fine protection: The other two boats proved to be the Perry commanded by Flusser, and the Commodore Hull; both old New York ferry boats, made into double-enders, with guns mounted fore and aft. Some time before the arrival of the fleet Col. R. G. Mitchell had sand hauled down at the foot of the green, and the old revolutionary cannon were mounted on wagon wheels and placed behind these earthworks, but a number of citizens protested, thinking the antiquated artillery could be of no service in defending the town, and would merely invite its bombardment and destruction: The guns were then parked behind the court-house: But mischievous boys would drag them down on the green every night, to be hauled behind the court house by the town Constable every morning. When the Federals came up town and found these guns, a union officer ordered the soldiers to break off their trunnions and spike them, cynically remarking, "there is more danger behind them than in front of them."

The fleet visited Edenton several times, and occasionally a gunboat would come in the bay and send a boat ashore for provisions, but would always pay for them, and at no time did the United States Navy commit any depredations here: The sailors seemed very friendly, and would often empty their ammunition pouches, and give their contents to the boys who wanted the powder for hunting. One time a Confederate Soldier named Joe

Dennis, in uniform, recklessly went down on the wharf with a crowd to meet one of these boats, but his uniform was so old and dingy he was not recognized. Some friends realizing his danger spirited him away.

On one occasion the Southfield, commanded by Capt. Chas. F. W. Behm, a fat old Dutchman, came in the bay, and having heard there was a Ranger camp located to the North of the town, fired several shots in that direction; they passed immediately over the house of an old Mrs. Douglass, who had been bed-ridden for ten years: Mrs. Douglass got up without assistance, and ran to a neighbor's house, and never went back to her sick bed again. After this two transports came in loaded with soldiers and fugitive negroes; the negroes committed many depredations, they went to the Page house, the family being in Virginia, the faithful old family servant in charge named John Nixon, protested in vain, but they broke up and destroyed a great deal of fine furniture: A lieutenant on General Henry W. Wessell's staff, having been informed what was going on, went with a squad of soldiers, and drove the negroes out, and had the property protected; other houses were also looted at the same time: One of these transports was called the Commodore Bell, after the war, she was sold by the United States Government to private parties, and became the familiar Steamer Louisa, that plied for many years between Baltimore, Norfolk and Edenton.

At one time two or three gunboats came in with General J. G. Foster and his staff on board; they came ashore with their horses and paraded over the town during the afternoon: No men were allowed ashore, and no depredations were committed by his special orders.

A great many people left Edenton during the civil war, some refugeed to Virginia, some retired to remote parts of the county, while others removed to their farms in the country. The population of Edenton then numbered about 1500 inhabitants.

THE NAVAL BATTLE OF SANDY POINT.

On the fifth of May, 1864, Capt. J. A. Cooke, of the Confederate Navy, left the Roanoke River, with the iron-clad "Albemarle" and two tenders, the Cotton plant and the Bombshell, determined if possible, to open up the sounds to Hatteras Inlet: When just opposite Sandy Point, at 2 o'clock that afternoon, he met the Federal Squadron, consisting of seven gunboats and double-enders, the Mattabessett, Sassacus, Wyalusing, Miami, Commodore Hull, Whitehead and Ceres, under the command of Captain Melancton Smith: The fighting continued furiously until five o'clock, when the Sassacus attempted to ram the Albemarle, but failing in that manoeuvre, they tried to entangle her in a long seine, but failed also, then an effort was made to torpedo her, and finally, with no better success, to throw a keg of gunpowder down her smokestack: The battle continued until dark, when some of the Federal vessels becoming disabled, withdrew: The Albemarle then turned her course toward the mouth of the Roanoke River, being obliged to burn all the lard and bacon on board for fuel. The total armament of the Federal fleet amounted to 55 guns. This is known as the Battle of Sandy Point. The Albemarle reached Plymouth in safety, and moored to the wharf, where she remained until blown up by Cushing, on the night of October 27th, 1864: By this brave act of Cushing, our entire section continued in the hands of the enemy until the close of the war, and Confederate activities ceased.

Of the dark days of Reconstruction that followed, I say nothing, other and abler reapers have dwelt graphically and at length concerning it, and I shall rest content to have my sheaves make their obeisance unto them.

What need we care if forests wither!
What need we fear if roof-tree fall!
For heaven has blessed us through it all.

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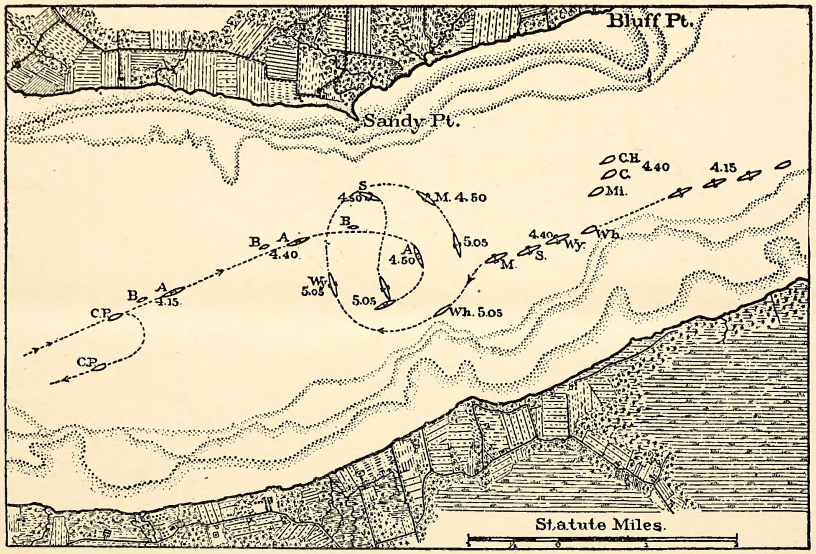

CHART OF THE ENGAGEMENT IN ALBEMARLE SOUND, at Sandy Point.

A, Albemarle; B, Bombshell; C P, Cotton Plant; M, Mattabesett; S, Sassacus; Wy, Wyalusing; Mi, Miami; C, Ceres; Wh, Whitehead; C H, Commodore Hull.

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Dillard, Richard, 1857-1928.
The Civil War in Chowan County, North Ca

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